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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: OBAMA INAUGURATION; NEW DELHI.

This countrywide cable reports on relevant media reaction/opinion from India's large non-English press. The Mission reports on English-language media via email through the daily "Early Edition" summary.

OBAMA INAUGURATION

¶1. "DREAM AND REALITY," editorial in 21 Jan centrist NAVBHARAT TIMES Hindi daily: "Despite its openness, American society is very conservative when it comes to gender and racial equality. When you see how difficult it is for women and non-whites to make it big, then you know the significance of Barak Obama's victory. It is no mean achievement for a non-White to become President of the U.S., nothing short of a big revolution. Obama's entire election campaign was full of symbolism, right up to his swearing in where he swore on the same bible that Abraham Lincoln had used. But after the bonhomie and the euphoria has passed will come the hard decisions. Will Obama live up to them? The Obama administration's focus is shifting from Iraq to Afghanistan. This is worrisome for India, because that will make Pakistan an important player in the game."

¶2. "HOPE AND CHALLENGE AT THEIR PEAK," editorial in January 21 centrist DAINIK BHASKAR Hindi daily: "Obama has played beautifully on the theme on hope. Right from the day he jumped into the election fray, to the days he campaigned on the streets to the final inauguration day - the persistent theme was hope. He had the audacity of

hope, and he coined the phrase "yes we can." All these proved to be a hit with the American electorate. With the bleak economic and political scenario, the Americans badly needed hope -- and there was Obama offering it. But now that he has ignited hopes the tough part is fulfilling the promises and realizing those hopes. That's Obama's challenge!"

¶3. "OBAMA'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS," editorial in the January 22 CPI (M) Organ GANASHAKTI Bengali daily, Kolkata. "Obama did not specifically spell out any policy or stand to be adopted by his Administration. This is the first time that an African-American has become President. So, a tremendous emotion was generated among the American people, and especially among the Blacks. They thought that Obama might announce something that would give a new direction. But Obama's speech failed to meet those expectations. With Bush's departure, people thought that the nightmare was over. But what would happen to Bush's legacy? The new President did not mention that. Still some of his remarks are quite significant. This is the good thing about his address."

¶4. "HIGH EXPECTATIONS WILL BE A LITMUS TEST FOR OBAMA" editorial in the January 22, 2009 centrist Gujarati daily GUJARATMITRA. "...no other president, barring J.F.K., in the United States history has created such an excitement all across the globe. The principal reason behind this is that the world super power has elected its first non-white as head of state, fulfilling the much cherished

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dream of Martin Luther King. Now that Obama has assumed office, he is faced by a storm of sky-rocketing expectations not just within America but also from the global community. While economic recession at home warrants his immediate attention, international issues like withdrawing U.S. forces from Iraq, reworking U.S. strategy in Afghanistan and counter-terrorism efforts will also keep him on his toes. At this point in time, we only wish that Obama succeeds in meeting the soaring expectations."

¶5. "AMERICA: WILL ITS OUTLOOK, PSYCHOLOGY CHANGE?" editorial in the January 22, 2009 Mumbai-based right-of-center Gujarati daily MUMBAI SAMACHAR. "During his inaugural speech, President Barack Obama said that America will work as a responsible nation. This was to convey that the reins of power will be handed over to the people of Iraq. It is worth welcoming this statement considering America's image, that has taken a severe beating during George Bush's presidency for his flawed foreign policy decisions. However, Obama has fallen short of enunciating his government's policy to put an end to terrorism, which is the principal burning issue in today's time. Besides, there is also this issue of climate change wherein America will have to play a lead role. The pertinent question here is: will Obama be able to stand up to the pressure of those conservative officials in the White House to bring about a change in their psychology and outlook?"

¶6. "BEGINNING OF THE OBAMA AGE" editorial in the January 22, 2009, Mumbai edition of right-of-center Marathi daily SAMANA. "The next four years will certainly be very trying for the 44th U.S. president, Barack Obama. While he may not have the solutions for all of the odds stacked against his presidency, he can certainly ensure that existing crises do not deepen...."

¶7. "WE ARE THE CHANGE" editorial in the January 22, 2009, Mumbai edition of centrist Marathi daily LOKMAT. "Obama struck the right note in his speech after his swearing in. He could inspire Americans to trust his optimism. His statements on the war against terrorism also seemed reasonable. Without sounding antagonistic, he conveyed

the right message to the terrorist outfits. He extended a hand of friendship towards the Islamic nations, and also took cognizance of the existing tensions in the Middle East..."

¶8. "THE NEW RAY OF HOPE" editorial in the January 22, 2009, Mumbai edition of left-of-center Marathi daily MAHARASHTRA TIMES. "There are a few too many expectations from the new president of America, but hopefully Obama is aware of the multiple challenges. He has therefore appealed to the American public for 'change from within.' His speech mentions restraint and economic discipline. Now the point is whether the American people are ready for that discipline..."

¶9. "HARD TIMES AHEAD," editorial in the January 22 independent Kolkata Bengali daily ANANDABAZAR PATRIKA. "Obama's inaugural address clearly points out that the

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moment of celebrating history and emotional outpouring is over. Now, it is time for plunging into work. Obama is fortunate as well as unfortunate. He faces hard times ahead. He will have to become worthy of the future. He must keep it in mind that the entire world not only welcomes him but also watches him. The world is pinning its hopes and aspirations on him. Obama will not be able to relax for a moment if he wants to fulfill even a fragment of huge expectations from him."

¶10. "INDICATION OF CHANGE IN WORLD POLITICS" editorial in January 22 Guwahati Assamese left-of-center ASAMIYA PRATIDIN. "...Barack Obama has brought with him a new hope while the world is struggling to overcome serious challenges such as economic meltdown, terrorism, racism, civil wars and, global warming. Obama may not be able to make notable changes in America's established policies as he will be more engaged in tackling current domestic financial problems to fulfill peoples' expectation. Obama's ascent from a humble background to the highest office of the world's most powerful nation itself has paved the way for change, and the white Americans have extended their full support to Obama to usher in that change."

¶11. "Priorities of Obama," editorial in January 22, 2009, independent Kannada daily VIJAYA KARNATAKA (circ: 700,000): "...President Obama has to strike a balance in the relationship with India and Pakistan. India is an emerging economic superpower and it can not be ignored by the U.S. any more. At the same time, the U.S. needs Pakistan to root out the Taliban from Afghanistan."

WHITE